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NEW YORK BOYCOTT COLORADO STATEMENT ON CELESTIAL SEASONINGS MEETING

An article in today's Rocky Mountain News gravely mischaracterized a meeting between members of the activist group NEW YORK BOYCOTT COLORADO and executives from Celestial Seasonings this week.

Six members of the group NEW YORK BOYCOTT COLORADO met with Celestial Seasonings CEO Mo Siegel and Vice President Mary Maury on Wednesday, February 3, at Mr. Siegel's request. NEW YORK BOYCOTT COLORADO endorses a boycott of all consumer products from Colorado because their parent companies pay taxes to the state, which uses that tax base to fight to uphold Amendment 2 in court.

An open and generally friendly dialogue ensued. Because Mr. Siegel and Ms. Maury had made themselves generally available to the New York group already, the meeting quickly got down to a discussion of the issues. When Mr. Siegel asked what Celestial might do to avoid the boycott, a potential plan evolved — at that meeting — that the company might head an in-state education program and actively campaign against Amendment 2. The very fact that this potential compromise was discussed is a tribute to the positive tone of the meeting.

AT NO TIME DID NEW YORK BOYCOTT COLORADO DEMAND ANY MONEY FROM CELESTIAL SEASONINGS FOR THE BOYCOTT EFFORT -- certainly not the $100,000 quoted in the Rocky Mountain News. NEW YORK BOYCOTT COLORADO WOULD ABSOLUTELY REFUSE, under any circumstances, to accept money from a Colorado consumer company. The quote "We think we can destroy you. Wouldn't it be cheaper..." in the article, attributed only to "one of them," is absolutely fictitious and was never spoken nor implied. The only time money was discussed at this meeting was about the cost of the in-state program, to theoretically be developed by Celestial and by Coloradans opposed to Amendment 2, which we would expect Celestial to underwrite -- hopefully in conjunction with other companies that oppose Amendment 2.

In recognition of the fact that taking such a stand is a change of pace for the company, and because Celestial plans to meet Monday with the Colorado-based Boycott Colorado Inc., NEW YORK BOYCOTT COLORADO agreed to put all actions against Celestial on hold until after that meeting, as a gesture of good will and to allow the company time to weigh different options.

Although Celestial Seasonings understandably disagrees with our position, we feel that the dialogue created was positive. It also gave Celestial options to avoid a boycott that didn't exist before, options that can apply to other Colorado companies that oppose Amendment 2. This is not extortion; it is a positive step that came about due to the willingness of both NEW YORK BOYCOTT COLORADO and Celestial Seasonings to have an open exchange.

It is still NEW YORK BOYCOTT COLORADO's position that there can be no such thing as "no position" on Amendment 2 for companies within Colorado. Not taking a stand, in fact, is

If not, actions will begin against Celestial Seasonings [illegible] next week that will include picketing of restaurants and stores that serve the tea, and a major "COLORADO TEA PARTY" at which Celestial will be dumped into New York Harbor. New York City is Celestial's #1 market, and the boycott actions will swiftly educate New Yorkers about Celestial's head-in the sand policies regarding civil rights in the company's own back yard. Few New Yorkers will choose to buy a product with such a repulsive attitude. Fewer still will cross a picket line to get it.

NEW YORK BOYCOTT COLORADO reminds all Coloradans that this and all other boycott actions would cease immediately upon the permanent repeal or overturn of Amendment 2. This is only the beginning of the ramifications of this amendment, the only one to any state's constitution to strip civil rights protection from a specific class of people.